

The Republican.

No. 1, Vol. 9.] LONDON, Friday, Jan. 2, 1824. [PRICE 6d.

TO WILLIAM ENGLAND, DOCTOR IN DIVINITY, ARCHDEACON OF DORSET, VICAR OF STAFFORD NEAR DORCHESTER, VISITING MAGISTRATE FOR DORCHESTER GAOL, &c.

Question---*WAS THE CHRISTIAN JESUS A REAL CHARACTER?*

Dorchester Gaol, Dec. 25, 1823,

Fifth Year of my sufferings un-

SIR, der your clerical care.

NOTWITHSTANDING, that you, as a Visiting Magistrate for Dorchester Gaol, rank among the most bitter of my Gaol Persecutors, I shall set aside all feeling on that head, and discuss in a "calm and dispassionate manner" the question which stands at the head of this letter. I select your name because you have lent me Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History; and the subject because that as you had lent me this work, the Reverend Mr. Richman of Dorchester felt excused, after the promise, in bringing forth evidence upon this question; I, therefore, feel a justification in addressing you publicly upon this very important enquiry.

I have shaped my question—*Was the Christian Jesus a real character?* so as to embrace the foundation of every species of Christianity; for, if I shew clearly, that no such person as the Jesus of the New Testament ever did exist, I overthrow the Unitarian as well as the Trinitarian Christianity.

I am not aware, that this question has ever been fairly examined before this attempt; although, it is evidently the most effectual, in deciding the value of the Christian religion; and even should I fail in shewing, that there is not the ordinary historical proofs, *that such a man as Jesus existed*, I lose nothing of the force of my attack upon Christianity and upon every other religion, because, his manhood and

Printed and Published by R. Carlile, 84, Fleet Street.

his Godhead are two distinct questions: but, I calculate on being able to shew most satisfactorily, that there never was any manhood in such a person *as this alleged Jesus* whereupon to graft the divinity; and if I do this, so as to bid defiance to refutation, I need not abuse nor ridicule the Christian religion, I shall remove its very foundation by historical reasonings and by those stubborn things called facts and dates.

The general admission has been, on both sides, that such a person as Jesus did live and was crucified at Jerusalem. The Unitarian, the Deist, or whatever other opponent Christianity has found, has sought to impugn the alleged miracles and the alleged divinity of this alleged character, but not the fact of his existence; and, for myself, I can say, that I never doubted the question of the former existence of Jesus, until I read over Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History in this Gaol, and began to examine the chronology of Christianity.

The science, the knowledge of the age, qualifies us in, and justifies our scouting the pretensions to prophecies and miracle-workings; but if it can be shewn, by a reference to facts and dates, admitted by Christians, that there is no sufficient evidence that such a person as the Jesus of the New Testament has existed, then your traffic in delusion will be sapped, you will be confounded, and you may cut the cords of your clerical hat, strip off your official habiliments, leave off your sanctimonious and mystical gravity, drop your divine hauteur, and betake yourself to some course of public instruction that will be useful and less expensive to the instructed.

There are two grounds upon which I have to pursue this question:—1st. An examination of the internal evidence of the four books in the New Testament, called the Gospels. 2d. An examination of the history of those books.

Born in a country which is called *Christian*, I have been taught to believe in my youth, that it is essential to my happiness to profess to be a *Christian*,—even though I am not taught the why nor the wherefore. At school, whether learning the native, the Latin, or the Greek language, the first book put into my hands, as soon as I can read, is a book called the New Testament. As a school boy, I read it over and over, so long as I remain at school; but the subject not being explained to me, not being interesting, not being instructive, communicates nothing but a comparative dullness to my young mind and few ideas. I am taught catechisms, collects, and prayers, and yet I learn nothing. I

find nothing in this Christian education that strikes upon my senses, that gives me ideas, that acquaints me with the nature and properties of the objects by which I am surrounded and which alone furnish me with ideas. Heaven is preached and hell is threatened—monsters are depicted to my weak imagination—I am overwhelmed with terrors that distract my thoughts and injure my health; but, instead of being instructed, this Christian education acts as a disease that impedes the developement of my mental faculties, and that jaundices my view of every real object. I leave school; I am able to read, to write in different languages; I know the use of figures; but I am still told, it is to be moral, to keep reading this book called the New Testament, and to be immoral, to cease to read it. I continue to read it from fear of personal injury and bad reputation; I arrive at manhood; I take a wife; I become a father; and still the custom of society imposes upon me the necessity of continuing to read this book. It is not enough, that constant reading has formed a memory that retains the contents of the whole book: it is not enough that I am a walking volume, that I can speak the contents of this book; I am urged by the priests to a mechanical reading, and to be constantly hearing it read by him and others. I am a perfect master of this book; I am a good Christian; but I am so ignorant as to know nothing but the contents of this book, and these avail me nothing; I cannot apply them to any of the purposes of life and happiness; I cannot reason upon them; I cannot improve myself nor others by them; my mind is almost as complete a blank as it was at the birth of my body.

Some accident, some impulse, some unnoticed cause, suggests, that this book may not be so closely connected with my happiness and welfare as I have been taught to expect: reflection follows upon reflection; I have doubts of its real value; I hear it impugned, and, to my astonishment, I find that philosophical investigations have been made in comments sought to be suppressed; my timid neighbour marks my doubts and secretly furnishes me with a human questioning of my idolized divinity! Terror, doubt, knowledge, all at once flash upon my ignorant mind; I read and tremble! but I read, tremble, and improve! and read and think until I cease to tremble.

Having advanced thus far; being rescued from this divinely mental thralldom; I catch a glimpse of my past ignorance; I seek improvement from new and proper sources; I compare the words of books with existing things; I search

history, compare dates, learn to reject all monstrous or improbable tales, communicate my change of mind freely to others, am defamed as a blasphemer, thrown into prison, and having completed the thirty third year of my age, and proceeding with the fifth of my imprisonment, I take up the New Testament to examine and to analyze its contents.

I find four books which profess, as the work of four different authors, to give an account of the life of Jesus: they are entitled, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew:"—"The Gospel according to St. Mark:"—"The Gospel according to St. Luke:"—"The Gospel according to St. John." In the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Luke, I find it stated, that this Jesus was *begotten by the Holy Ghost*; and in each of these Gospels, I find it imputed that he was *the Son of God*. I look round to enquire what meaning can be attached to those words: "*begotten by the Holy Ghost and Son of God*." I can find none. Deep enquiry convinces me that all the tales about *Gods* and *Ghosts* have been fabled, and my impression is strengthened, that these alleged Gospels are fables. In some of these Gospels, I find this Jesus called by his supposed neighbours "*the Carpenter's Son*:" in St. Mark's Gospel chap. vi. ver. 3, I find him called "*the Carpenter*;" but there is no corroborating evidence that he was ever so honestly employed as to be working as a carpenter. The general statement is, that he roved about from place to place, sometimes by land, sometimes by water, performing miracles upon diseased persons, warring with alleged devils, feeding thousands without food, often running away from the Jews, his supposed countrymen; but, at last, taken by them and nailed to a cross of wood.

The first question that arises is: how did he support himself and followers? We do not find that he had house or home, property or profitable profession; but we do find him advising those who have property to dispose of it and to follow him; and, in one instance, we find his disciples hungry and helping themselves to the growing corn of some Jewish Farmer. Had there been a few of the English Christian Laws in Judea; had there been a *Vagrant Act* and a *Tread Mill*, such a wanderer and his followers would have been inevitably committed *as rogues and vagabonds* by some Clerical Magistrate; as it must have been impossible for them to have given a good account of themselves, seeing that they laboured not, and were without honest means of support; for food and raiment had its market price in Judea

as well as in every other country; and from the particularly barren state of that country, it is calculated, that more than ordinary labour and cultivation were necessary to raise it.

As to the parents and age of this Jesus, there is nothing satisfactory. St. Matthew and St. Luke tell us that he was born of a virgin; but St. Mark and St. John do not say a word about birth, age or time, and it is only supposed by some allusions to Jewish Festivals, that he was a public character three years. St. Matthew tells us that soon after he was born, he was removed to Egypt from fear of Herod; but St. Luke, so far contradicts this, as to say, that his parents carried him to Jerusalem every year, and notices him as being an extraordinary child at twelve years of age. It certainly behoved those, who professed to know how his infancy was passed, to inform us what he was doing from the age of twelve years to the time of his public career; for, it would have been not at all discreditable to have shewn even that he was learning and following the trade of a carpenter. We are told, that he had a taste for talking about *building a temple in three days*; a sort of bragging in trade as to capability of performance, but we have no proof that he was a carpenter, or even a carpenter's son. If we are to believe these alleged Gospels, we must believe that the people of that day lived in a state of idleness, and that all were unproductive consumers, a case that could not last long, scarcely so long as the short career attributed to Jesus.

Here then is an alleged character, born of poor parents, made to live without means and to pass through life without an object; for it will be shewn, that his moral teachings are not original, and so scanty, that every moral man might be supposed to be teaching as much or more in every hour's conversation. This I take to be sufficient internal evidence, *that the alleged Gospels are fabulous, and that the hero of the tale was a fabled and not a real character*: but weight will be given to this conclusion, when an analysis of these Gospels is fairly set forth.

As well as others, I have, even of late, been in the habit of talking about the morality of the Gospels; but I have now found, by an analysis, that general clamour and early impressions have warped my judgment upon this subject. To my surprise the Gospels have not the slightest claim to be considered moral treatises. Many single sentences spoken by Confucius, by Epicurus, by Seneca, by Marcus Antonius, are of more value than all the moral sentences to

be found in the four gospels. As there is a great similarity in the four Gospels, as the amount of moral and immoral sentences is about equal in each, and as St. Matthew's is generally believed to have been the first written, I have carefully prepared an analysis of this book, under the heads of "Moral Sentences"—"Immoral Sentences"—and "Idle, fabulous or romantic tales." Which is here set forth.

ANALYSIS OF ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

MORAL SENTENCES.

BLESSED are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Blessed are the meek—the merciful—the pure in heart—the peace-makers.

Swear not at all.

With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

Honour thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt do no murder, shalt not commit adultery, shalt not steal, shalt not bear false witness.

IMMORAL SENTENCES.

TAKE no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Take no thought for the morrow.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Wherefore I say unto you all manner of sin and blas-

phemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them: Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him, shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Woe unto the world because of offences! *For it must needs be that offences come;* but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

IDLE, FABULOUS, OR ROMANTIC TALES.

SEE Matthew chap. i. ver. 18, to the end of chap. ii. Chap. iii. verses 9, 11, 16 and 17. Chap. iv. verses 1 to 11, and ver. 34. Chap. viii. verses 1 to 3, 5 to 16, 24 to 26, 28 to 34. Chap. ix. verses 2 to 8, 18 to 35. Chap. x. ver. 1. Chap. xi. ver. 5. Chap. xii. verses 10 to 13, 22 to 28, 31, 32, 36, 38 to 40, 43 to 45. Chap. xiv. verses 15, to the end. Chap. xv. verses 22 to 38. Chap. xvi. verses 27 and 28. Chap. xvii. verses 1 to 8, 14 to 21, 27. Chap. xx. verses 30 to 34. Chap. xxi. verses 12 to 14, 19. Chap. xxvii. verses 52 and 53. Chap. xxviii. verses 2 to the end.

It was my intention to transcribe the whole of the "idle, fabulous, or romantic" part of the Gospel, here analyzed, but on counting upwards of two hundred verses, I shrunk from the task, considered the waste of time, waste of paper, waste of space in my publication, and have no doubt but that you and my other readers will be content with the references. I have at any rate given you fair play, in transcribing every sentence that teaches a moral; and sorry I am to see that they are nothing more than those common place sentiments which the most ignorant man may be supposed

capable of uttering and observing. They will bear no kind of comparison with the morals of other ancient writers, who were not degraded with Judaism or Christianity. Confucius is incomparably superior as a moralist to the Hero of the New Testament. The same may be said of every one of the Grecian and Roman moralists. The scanty morality of the New Testament is buried in a mass of immorality and romantic tale, and is therefore a very unfit book for instruction. I have extracted such sentences as are decidedly immoral, and I might have justly taken more that are disputable; but I was content, I saw that I had done enough, when I exhibited a greater amount of immorality than of morality. Understand, as you read, that I do not impute this objectionable matter to your son of God; my argument is to shew that no such person existed, and that the sentiments of the first Gospel must be received as the sentiments of the writer who has so successfully and so unfortunately established a new religion.

Here, then, I infer, that there is no internal evidence in the four Gospels, that such a person as Jesus existed, as there stated. There are no kind of dates beyond the references to men in office, these have been one and all disputed, and cannot be clearly shewn to correspond the one with the other. There is no division of time beyond some vague and contradictory references to Jewish festivals. There is no mention of any age at which Jesus began or ended his career, except in St. Luke, and this writer will, by and by, be shewn to have been the least likely to know any thing about the matter, as there seems to be proof, that he did not write until the middle or close of the second century. It is asserted by the Unitarians, that the two first chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel are interpolations, and not the writing of him who wrote the other parts; but on this head I will not quarrel; I am quite content to take the Gospels as they now stand; only I would say, that to get at their spirit and real character, it is necessary to read those collected in a volume under the title of the Apocryphal New Testament. Read all the Gospels and Epistles that have been handed down to us, and then you see the thing (Christianity) in its true light. Read the "Gospel according to St. Mary;" read the "Gospel of the Infancy," and one or two more. And then you will read on correctly those which are found in the book called the New Testament.

Finding, that there are no satisfactory dates in the Gospels of the New Testament, nor even in any other part of

that volume, we will go to the Ecclesiastical History in search of those dates: we will rest upon your own favourite authors—Eusebius, as an ancient—Lardner, as a modern: and I am ready to allow, that both were men of unparalleled zeal and labour in their cause. If Eusebius was a little weak in judgment, if he credited idle tales, flattered his supporters and slandered his opponents, nothing can exceed the fairness and mildness of Lardner in pursuit of real dates to the origin and progress of Christianity.

A religion called Christianity is observed: we have a clear and connected history of it throughout *seventeen hundred years*; but this is called the *nineteenth century*: it is asserted, that Jesus, its Hero, its God, was born 1823 years since. I have examined Eusebius, the ancient, and Lardner, the modern historian, and I cannot find that either of them can trace any the least authentic account within the first of these eighteen centuries, about Jesus, about Christianity, or about any sect of Christians. Fabulous accounts, I know, there are, which it is my task now to expose.

It is attempted to be shewn by Christian or Ecclesiastical Historians, that all the books of the New Testament were written within the first of the eighteen centuries; but if I can strike off the first century from the account, and if I shew that the writers ante-dated their tales by near a century, I shall then claim the consideration of having overthrown all the pretensions to true history which are made for the existence of Jesus and the origin of Christianity.

I open my volume of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History and find it the fifth edition, printed in 1650, of a translation made by Meredith Hanmerth, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Eusebius wrote it in the fourth century, when under the protection of Constantine the Emperor, so that he had every encouragement to write fairly and freely; but my translator says of him: "I am given to understand there have been divers which attempted to translate these ancient Ecclesiastical Histories, yet have given over their purpose, partly being discouraged with the diversity and corruption of Greek copies, and partly being dismayed with the crookedness of Eusebius' style which is by reason of his imperfect allegations.—When I took pen in hand, and considered with myself all the circumstances of these histories, and found in them certain things which the authors might have left unwritten, but the interpreter in no wise untranslated, I remembered the saying of Augustin—*it belongeth to the divinity not to err*—and that these Historiographers were but

men, yet rare and singular persons. Daily experience teacheth us there is no garden without some weeds, no meadow without some unsavoury flowers, no forest without some unfruitful trees, no country without some barren land, no wheat without some tares, no day without a cloud, no writer without some blemish, or that escapeth the reprehension of all men. I am sure there is no reader so foolish as to build upon the antiquity and authority of these histories, as if they were holy scripture: there is an historical faith which is not in the compass of our creed; and if you happen to light upon any story that savoureth of superstition, or that seemeth impossible, refer it to the author, take it as cheap as ye find it, remember that the Holy Ghost saith, *Every man is a liar*. If so, peradventure the reader too, then let the one bear with the other." Good! Meredith Hanmer. Again, he says, "I found the Greek copy of Eusebius in many places wonderfully crabbed, his history full of allegations, sayings, sentences, and epistles, and the self same authority oftentimes alleged to the confirmation of sundry matters, that the words are short, the sense obscure, and hard to be translated.—Whatsoever I found in the Greek, were it good or bad, that have I faithfully, without any partiality at all, laid down in English."

Eusebius, in the preface to his History, says, "I, determining to publish the same, (history) in writing, will not take my entrance from any other place, than from the first dispensation of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. But truly, the circumstance itself, even in the beginning, craveth pardon, being greater than our strength can sustain. I confess, indeed, that which we promise, to be absolute, and that which we profess to omit nothing, to be a thing incomprehensible: for we, first taking this argument in hand, endeavouring to tread a solitary and untrodden way, praying that God may be our guide, and the power of our Lord Saviour, our present helper and aider; *yet can we no where find as much as the bare steps of such as have passed the same path before us, having only small shews and tokens wherewith divers here and there in their several times have left unto us particular declarations, as it were certain sparkles, whilst that they lifting their voices from far and above, from whence crying as out of a certain watch-tower, to direct us what way we ought to go, and how without error and danger to order our talk.*—I suppose, verily, that I have taken in hand an argument very necessary, because I have not found any Ecclesiastical writer which unto this day hath in

this behalf employed any diligence." Here is an ample confession from Eusebius, that he was deficient in the necessary authentic matter whereupon to found his history, and that tradition was to be summoned to his aid, instead of written documents and correct dates, full three centuries after the alleged life of Jesus.

The first authenticated fact in his Ecclesiastical History, relating to the Christians, is the letter of Pliny to Trajan, which is known to have been written at the commencement of the second century. This letter, with Trajan's answer, we have in the collection of Pliny's letters; and though the Christians view it as an early authenticity of the truth of the contents of their New Testament, they lose sight of the fact, that it strikes a ponderous blow, in reality, at their whole system. I yield the fact, that Christianity existed in Antioch, or in the province of Bythinia, in the reign of Trajan: but when I see so brilliant a man as Pliny, ignorant of the existence of such a sect, before he was sent by Trajan to Bythinia as a proconsul, I cannot conclude that any such a sect was then known at Rome. It is said, that Trajan persecuted the Christians; but it is in proof that he went from Rome to Bythinia to find them. There is no account that Trajan persecuted any Christians in Rome, or at any other place between Rome and Antioch. It is at Antioch that I find the birth of Christianity. That city was then the capital of the eastern world, or of that part of Asia which was part of the Roman Empire. It was the centre of all the commerce of that neighbourhood; and was noted as a hot-bed of luxury, effeminacy, and an ignorant dissolute populace upon whom a new superstition is most easily planted.

Nicholas, and the sect of Nicolaitanes, mentioned in the Apocalypse, sprung up in Antioch. But there were sects among the Jews and Grecians before any thing was heard of Christianity, and all the monastic sects of Christians have been nothing more than an imitation of the Jewish and Grecian sects. It is absolutely necessary to read the writings of Philo, the Jew, as a prelude to obtain a correct knowledge of the origin of Christianity. Josephus may be also read to advantage where he describes the Jewish sects.

It is said of Saul and Barnabas, that their first successful preaching and rendezvous was in Antioch; and that the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

It is an indisputable fact, that neither Philo, nor Josephus have taken notice of any such a person as Jesus Christ, nor of any such a sect as a sect of Christians. It is admitted,

that nothing was known of Christians in Jerusalem, when it was besieged and taken by Titus, and if we are to take the books of the New Testament, as having been written before that period, we must believe, that, at least, the half of Jerusalem must have been made Christians by the teachings and miracles of Jesus and his disciples: or are we to be told, that this divine doctrine and influence so decreased in its birth-place, that in less than forty years, Jerusalem did not count one believer in Jesus Christ? I know that tradition furnishes an uninterrupted succession of Bishops for the church at Jerusalem; but this tradition overlooks the fact of the siege and destruction of that city. Eusebius gives us the names of fifteen bishops as having succeeded each other from one of the first disciples to the reign of Adrian, a period of just one hundred years: but it unfortunately happens that, in another place, he has placed the third of these Bishops in the reign of Trajan, and allows twelve more to have followed by the next reign; that is, he makes three to fill out the reigns of twelve Emperors, or a period of eighty years, and then brings in twelve more in the first eighteen years of the reign of Adrian: and to complete his anachronism, he makes martyrs of two out of the first three, and of none of those who must have so rapidly succeeded each other, or nearly one in a year.

Antioch is made the rendezvous for the travelling preachers in the book called the Acts of the Apostles; and though the scenes of their drama were laid at Jerusalem, after that city was destroyed, as they must be necessarily laid somewhere where detection could not well ensue, I verily think, that no church, no Christians, were known about the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, until the superstition had taken deep root in other parts of the Roman Empire, and the supposed seat of the origin of Christianity became a place for veneration, as was subsequently the case with the European Crusaders.

Luke, the alleged writer of the Gospel under that name, and of the Acts of the Apostles, is supposed to have been a physician in Antioch. He addresses his books to a Theophilus, who was a bishop in Antioch, about the middle of the second century. Dr. Lardner says, about the year 168. Theophilus was a convert from the heathen world, and Luke thus addresses him: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses,

and ministers of the word ; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." Here is a clear case. Luke says, *that many others have written Gospels before him* ; but, instead of his respecting either that of Matthew, Mark, or John, he is evidently dissatisfied with the imperfections of all he knows, and sets about writing what he considers, and what every other person must allow to be, a better written romance, or novel, or Gospel, or whatever you may be pleased to have it called, than any that had been before written upon the same subject. He either knows not, or heeds not, Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. He is the only one to give us any dates. But for his Gospel we should not know whether Jesus lived one or one hundred years, excepting what Matthew has said about the slaying of the infants and the fleeing to Egypt. Had Luke known that Matthew was a real disciple of a real philosopher, and that he had written a Gospel, he could not fail to have noticed him and his Gospel as a guide, but he says, that he has known the whole matter from the beginning, and seems to hint, that no one can know more of it than himself, which is likely to be true, if we allow that he began to write this Gospel about the year 150, or about 50 years after Christianity had sprung up at Antioch.

We have also a clear and satisfactory account of the Bishops of Antioch : only we must not compare the Bishops of that day with the Bishops of this. They were not Princes, not men wallowing in wealth ; but something of the stamp of our village curates or Methodist preachers, labouring hard in their vocations upon very small, if any, stipends. But in the third century, after they had become formidable from the support of numbers, they began to exhibit just that carriage which we find in our modern bishops—haughty, turbulent, tyrannical, and intriguing. To keep a religion mild in its nature, no office connected with it should have more than a hundred pounds a year. Large incomes for small services are very corrupting things ; they occasion intrigues, servility, treachery, and all the bad passions which so degrade mankind.

The Bishops of Antioch are said to have been : 1 Eudodius, 2 Ignatius, 3 Heros, 4 Cornelius, 5 Eros, 6 Theophilus. Some consider *Heros* and *Eros* to be the same person. Lardner does not venture the supposition that

Luke's Gospel was addressed to this Theophilus; he supposes, that Theophilus was acquainted with it; but his object was to shew that Luke had written a hundred years earlier, in which he has failed; as I shall by and by further shew.

It is asserted by Eusebius and others, that there were persecutions of the Christians both in the reigns of Nero and Domitian; but there is no proof of this case; whilst there are proofs, in the writings of Josephus, who lived a Chief in Judea at the time, that they were Jews who were so persecuted: and, we otherwise learn, were commonly designated in Rome as *Galileans*; which name was also continued to the early Christians. Tacitus, who wrote about forty years after Josephus, calls them *the execrable Christians* whom Nero persecuted, and calculates that the persecution was so severe, as to strengthen them who were truly execrable in their manners and superstition, with the sympathy of mankind. This application suits the Jews better than the Christians. It is quite clear, that the superstition under which the Jews dwelt did incessantly dispose them to be seditious under the Roman sway; and their turbulence did not cease, until they were so destroyed or dispersed, as to be too few in numbers to do further mischief. It is superstition, not Atheism, that has ever been the chief promoter of seditions. They were not the French Atheists, but the French Christians who made such havoc during the revolution.

Eusebius does not bring forward any one fact to shew, that either books or men were known as *Christian* within the first century: in fact, a computation from the Christian era had not begun in his time; therefore, he could not see this great chasm of one hundred years in the history of Christianity. There was no tale, no tradition, but to which he gave a ready ear; still it is evident, that he felt quite at a loss how to begin his Ecclesiastical History. He has copied largely from Josephus to shew, that the Jews suffered, as the Gospels menace; but the answer to this is, *that the Gospels were written after the Jews had so suffered*. As I admit the existence of Christianity in the reign of Trajan, where Eusebius first quotes a corroborated fact to prove it, I quit his volume, and I proceed to the more methodical Lardner, who, I believe, has done all that can be done for Christians and Christianity; but that all is not enough.

Lardner commences his work on the Credibility of the Gospel History, with showing the correctness of several matters of fact in the Gospels and Epistles which relate to the

state of the Jews and the Roman sway over them. No reader will hesitate to yield all that is asked on this head; for it is no difficult matter to state with precision what was the particular state of any country in Europe throughout the last century. He opens his history of Christianity, not with shewing that the Gospels or Epistles existed within the first century, but with shewing, that there are other writings, such as the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle of Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Ignatius, &c. &c. which have corresponding sentiments with those scattered throughout the New Testament. Lardner's inference is, that these corresponding sentiments are quotations from the New Testament, and he thence gives to the different books of that volume a prior date; but I should be equally justified in saying, that the corresponding sentiments in the books of the New Testament are quotations from the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle of Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Epistles of Ignatius, &c. Clement and Ignatius make mention of no writings in the New Testament, but two of the Epistles of Paul, the one to the wrangling Corinthians, the other to the Ephesians. It is now well known, that there were more than a hundred different Gospels and Epistles afloat in the second and third centuries all agreeing in some things, and all disagreeing in other things: but to say which of them were written before the other, unless where express allusions are made, is quite impossible; for, *there is no one of them can be cleared up as an authentic document, written at a given time by the person whose name it bears.* It was common to forge Gospels and Epistles and to attach some celebrated name to them, by way of giving them weight; and every Church or sect had its favourites among these Gospels and Epistles; though the Gospels of the New Testament, having the greatest amount of harmony, were in more general reception.

Interpolation was another species of forgery to which written books have been liable, and there is scarcely a Christian writing, that has come down to us from the third century, that is free from them: nor scarcely any two under the same title but have variances in the reading. A Dr. Mill, whom Lardner often quotes, found many thousand different readings in the different MS. copies of the books of the New Testament which had passed his hand. I will not be positive; but I think he mentions so many as sixty thousand various readings: one thousand would be considered

enough to pollute the whole stream of history communicated by them.

I have read no farther of Lardner's Credibility, &c. than to his account of Origen; but all I wanted for the purpose of this letter was to see his history of the second century. Eusebius had before taught me, that he could find nothing to say of the first. I find, that he cannot; and *I challenge Christendom to shew, that any one book or person called Christian existed before the reign of Trajan: or within what is now called the first century.* I do not pretend to fix any year at which Christianity took its rise at Antioch; but there we can first trace it very near to the year one hundred, and from thence we have a clear and connected history of its progress. I can readily believe, that a Peter, a Paul, and many others, did go about preaching, and writing epistles from places to persons at other places; and that, as a matter of course, when they meet with success in this their new doctrine, they soon made their way to Rome, then the metropolis of the world. But, if you place these men in the middle of the first century, the history of the origin of Christianity becomes disjointed, the references to Jerusalem are all contradicted, and evidently proved to be fabulous, and the chain of facts is destroyed.

Nor will I attempt to say what gave rise to the tale of Jesus; but this is known, that Plato depicted such a man in the outline of a necessary moral teacher; that Plato was called divine by his disciples and pronounced to have been born of a virgin, long before the date of Christianity; that there is much of Platonism in St. John's Gospel and Epistles, and much of a *bastard Platonism* scattered throughout the Christian writings; and it is further known, that a tale about a carpenter, his virgin wife, and divine offspring, has been traced to be very ancient in the eastern part of Asia. The story of such a person having been born in Judea and crucified at Jerusalem, I take to be fabulous; because, there is no sufficient proof of the fact; because, there is no proof that any such a sect as a sect of Christians was known in Jerusalem before its destruction by Titus; because, there is no evidence that any Christian books, that do now exist, or that did ever exist, were known to exist before the second century; and lastly, because, no person, of whatever nation, who wrote in the first century, has taken any notice of Jesus or of a sect of Christians. There are interpolated passages in Josephus; but no Christian of the present day,

who has read the History of his sect, and the controversies thereon, will venture to claim Josephus as an evidence for his Gospels.

I might have transcribed largely from Eusebius and Lardner, in confirmation of my conclusion, that Christianity does not extend within the first century; but, the simple assertion of that conclusion is enough to call forth Christians to shew the contrary. Ignatius is the earliest known character, as a Christian, mentioned by Eusebius or Lardner. There are others mentioned; but none of them supported by the same testimony. Polycarp an undoubted Bishop of Smyrna has left record of a meeting with Ignatius.

The writer of Matthew's Gospel makes Jesus to say chap. 11, ver. 12. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent take it by force." And again at Chap. xviii. ver. 17, Jesus is made to speak of "the Church." I take this to be proof of the fable and of its late date. In the first place, John is said to have been cotemporary with Jesus, and Jesus could not have said in the early part of his ministry: *from the days of John the Baptist until now*; nor could a Christian Church have been established, nor is it elsewhere said that there was such an establishment, in the time of Jesus. But these are only two out of a hundred points of the kind which the Gospels afford of having been written at a late date, and of the fabulous character of the subject.

I conclude with the conviction that I have adduced evidence enough to shew that no such a person as the Jesus of the Gospels ever lived: my course has necessarily been that of negative assertion; for I could only enquire for the existence of evidence to the contrary, and in default of finding it, pronounce that there is none. Eusebius has failed; Lardner has failed to shew *that the Christian Jesus was a real character*; and every writer upon the subject has evidently failed; because, there is evidence to trace Christianity to Antioch in the reign of Trajan, and none to trace it any where beyond that point. A mass of fable is known to have grown up with it. Romance has been the peculiar property of Jewish and Christian writers, and legendary tales form the major part of Christian writings.

It is not unlikely, that I may address you further as I read on in Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History, and after I have seen the present letter in print, for I write

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it off hand, and send it in scraps to the printer: but my head is clear upon this subject; and the sweetest revenge that I can take of you my *Christian, Clerical, Magisterial Gaol Persecutor* is to shew you that I am wrongfully punished, and that **THE CHRISTIAN JESUS WAS NOT A REAL CHARACTER.**

RICHARD CARLILE.

P. S. I offer you the following anecdotes as two reasons why I am not a Christian.

The celebrated Dean Prideaux, in his "Letter to the Deists," says,—"'Tis only *error*, or falsehood that desires to shelter itself in the dark; but *truth* being always certain of its own stability, boldly offers itself to every man's search, and the more it is sifted and examined into, the more bright and effulgent will it appear."

Bishop Kidder in his "Demonstration of the Messiah," Vol. 2. p. 78, says, "that were a wise man to choose his religion by the lives of those who profess it; perhaps Christianity would be the last religion he would choose."

THE FOLLOWING PETITION, BY MR. CARLILE, HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO MR. PEEL, FOR PRESENTATION TO THE KING.

SIR, Dorchester Gaol, Dec. 26, 1823.
I TAKE the liberty to forward to you a petition for presentation to His Majesty, and beg your attention to it at your earliest convenience.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

RICHARD CARLILE.

To the Right Honourable Robert
Peel, Secretary of State for the
Home Department.

TO THE KINGS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

May it please your Majesty.

The petition of Richard Carlile, in the fifth year of his imprisonment in Dorchester Gaol, for having sold a book entitled, "The Theological Works of Thomas Paine," and a book entitled, "Principles of Nature, by Elihu Palmer."

SHEWETH,

THAT it was a practice with the first Christians, when persecuted under the Roman Emperors, to write apologies for their opinions, and to present them to the reigning Emperor: and that in many instances the Emperors have been thereby moved to decree that throughout the Roman Empire the persecutions of the Christians should be stayed; though, as the result has shewn, the progress of the Christians tended to overthrow the religion established by law, or the worship of the Pagan Immortal Gods.

That, as persecutions for differences in religious opinions have been long carried on in this country, and, as it is always a proof that the opinions which persecute are more weak and more wicked than those which are persecuted, your Majesty is now petitioned to put a stop to all such persecutions, and to guarantee, not only the freedom of holding opinions, which cannot be denied, but the freedom of uttering those opinions, so as to constitute the practice of free discussion.

That, your Petitioner published the books, for which he has been more than four years imprisoned, with a conviction that they were strictly founded in truth, and that they were superior in instruction to those books on which they were a comment; and after so long an imprisonment and solitude, after the most calm examination of the contents and bearings of all the books in question, your Petitioner finds his conviction strengthened, that the books for which he has been imprisoned are unanswerable, and he challenges existing knowledge to refute them.

That, the question at issue is the good foundation of the Christian religion; and, that the result of the discussion upon this question must be, either to overthrow this religion or to establish it upon an indestructible basis, to shew that it is consonant with truth and the knowledge of the physical ar-

rangements of the universe. And it is submitted to your Majesty, that discussion cannot alter the facts of the case, that your power cannot defend it, if false, nor aid it, if true; the only power your Majesty has in the question is, to encourage the discussion on the subject, and not to suffer the odds to be on the one side a prison against the pen, and profit on the other in its support. Your Majesty has the power to become the umpire between the scriptural combatants to see fair play and to reward the conqueror.

That, as your Majesty is the Head of the Church of England, and has the power to call a convocation of the clergy, that they may discuss any subject submitted to them; your Petitioner asks, that your Majesty will be pleased forthwith to call such a convocation, or to appoint a commission to examine your Petitioner's oppugnancy to the Christian religion.

That, your Petitioner does not quarrel in the character of a sectarian, nor is his object to establish any thing new under the name of religion: he has but one motive—to have all convinced of the good foundation of that which exists, if such a defence can be made of it by those who are instructed and paid to support it, to break up that horrid sectarianism which now distracts the whole people and even the Government of this country.

That, it is the opinion of your Petitioner, that no one thing that your Majesty can do would fix a brighter lustre on your Majesty's reign, than to order the immediate liberation of all persons imprisoned for religious disputes; and to guarantee the right of free discussion on all subjects for the future.

That, there are eight persons now in prison for the sale of your Petitioner's publications, and the ninth and the tenth still keeping them in open sale, and proud to enter a prison upon the same terms: which perseverance is a line of conduct they have learnt from the early Christians—the success of which is certain.

Your Majesty has now the opportunity to claim the merit of granting that which passing events will inevitably enforce within a few years, perhaps immediately—the practice of free discussion.

Your Majesty's Prisoner,
RICHARD CARLILE.

Dorchester Gaol, Dec. 26, 1823.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM A FRIEND.

IN the 19th number of "The Republican," Nov. 14, 1823, as a sort of postscript to my reply to an essay from J. E. C. I inserted some observations from a friend. This friend has occasionally made remarks in a very familiar way on various matters which have appeared in this work. I have not always assented to his observations, but we know each other and can bear to be contradicted by each other. I do not now even assent to several of his positions, but I think it may be useful to shew, how some subjects are handled. My desire has always been to promote free discussion, without much regard to what conclusions particular discussions may lead, and this too, because the end and aim of all I have ever done, since I first became a publisher have constantly been the extirpation of error and the establishment of truth. I shall insert the communications of my friend just as I have received them. Those whose curiosity may lead them to a closer examination, will take the trouble to turn to the passages quoted.

R. C.

REMARKS ON YOUR LETTER TO THE REVEREND
ROBERT HINDMARSH.

Nov. 14, 1823.

OF how difficult it is to eradicate old and absurd associations, you are a perfect example. Until a man, can get over this, and bring his notions to the test of reason only, he cannot make much, if any progress beyond a certain point, and this is the case with you. "*Materiality, infinite and eternal, against Spirituality, infinite and eternal, and vice versa.* That is, one foolery against another foolery. One nonsense against another nonsense. It is just as easy to prove the existence of *spirit* as *matter*, and the same argument will do equally well for either. *Infinite* is a word without meaning, he who uses it has no idea for it, and consequently can convey none. *Eternal*, is the same. If I were a Christian, I would not defend myself, but would select your own arguments against spirituality, turn them upon you and call upon you to explain yourself. You would then either be silenced, or, be compelled to resort to the arguments of the spiritualists, or, to confess your own ignorance.

You condemn, Metaphysics (p. 610.) but no man can be a wise man who is not a profound Metaphysician. "Germany is the

land of spiritual romance, and diseased imaginations." True---But is not his a diseased imagination, who talks of "*infinite, eternal matter*?" What is this, but "*spiritual romance*" under another name? Your *matter* is as much *spiritual* as is any Ghost, or God, of them all. Your *matter* exists only in the *imagination*, and can exist no where else, neither is it necessary for any useful purpose whatever, that it should have any other existence, since it is altogether redundant and useless. We want it not. Is *matter*, IN, WITHIN, what you call MIND, if so, there needs no eternal thing. Is it without what you call MIND, then you can know nothing of it. What you do know, all you can ever know, is, that which is within, what you call MIND, or is itself what you call MIND, known also by the word *idea*. All then that can be known is the *idea*. It is enough that the *idea* exists, since it answers every purpose just as well, as if there were another existence called *matter*, which there cannot be, and which if there could be; would be altogether redundant and useless.

You "will be glad to be informed where he (Mr. Clowes) gets his information about that which is invisible." Ask yourself the question, as to your *invisible MATTER*, and then sit down and write an answer to the question, or, take the question from me; and answer it.

Clowes's, positions, 1 to 7, (page 610, 611,) are admirable definitions, a very trifling alteration of them will be just as pertinent in reply to my question, as they can be to the *invisible world*, and will prove the *existence of matter*, just as clearly as they do the invisible world.

Ridiculous as you say Swedenborgs nonsense is, and truly ridiculous as it is, it is not a whit more so than your materiality, (but it is more mischievous) nor more ridiculous than, "*the elementary bases are gases, &c.*" p. 621.

"Where do we find the *spirit*?" p. 621. where do we find the *matter*? "Answer me this, and do not say that *matter (spirit)* is incomprehensible to all but such silly weak-headed men as (Clowes)" Carlile. From the word Swedenborg near the bottom of p. 621. read to the end of the paragraph, as my words addressed to yourself. What you say is so very well expressed and so strictly true, that you may take it as your own rule in your answer to me.

The paragraph, p. 622. is excellent, clear, strong, conclusive, and what follows is very good indeed.

Paragraph, p. 623. As to tastes is equally true, and useful except what you say of organization, p. 624.

"On a foundation of error he built, a fabric of error, and dwelt upon it (*will he, Carlile,*) for life." p. 16.

Upon the whole the letter to Hindmarsh must do good notwithstanding the imperfections I have pointed out. The number of "The Republican" in which it is inserted, is altogether excellent.

MATERIALS FOR THINKING.

December 12, 1823.

It would be good policy in you to preserve those papers sent you which contain remarks on passages in "The Republican." The notes I send you might all be read by any one, friend or foe, and no harm could therefore happen to any one if they were at any time seized. You do quite right in destroying those which if seized might be used to the injury of other persons in their temporal concerns by the publication of their letters. I do not expect your assent to many propositions at a first reading, but I have no doubt at all of your assent when your head becomes more logical than it is yet, although your progress in the art of thinking has been very rapid. For your own satisfaction read the conclusion of your letter to Mr. Carter, I mean all from p. 718, and then read some one of your early essays in "The Republican," and you will see the change that has taken place not only in style but in reasoning. It is good for a man to compare himself with himself.

I am now going to attack you on the old score, your *superstition*. You acknowledge your ignorance p. 705, and what you there say on the subject is very good, and your conclusion is, for the reasons given, your disbelief in "One supreme being---God," also correct. Having acknowledged your ignorance, you immediately display your knowledge. Having declared your disbelief, you immediately declare your belief. "I believe in an (*one*) Almighty Power." Having said, "no man can believe beyond his knowledge," you immediately declare that you do believe in *one* power. But what it is you say? "*I know not*," knowledge may be translated *I know, yes*. You then in words declare that you do believe "beyond your knowledge." The qualifying clause which follows does not at all help you off the horn of the dilemma, there you hang fast enough. In p. 718 and 719 you explain your meaning. In p. 718 you make an aggregate of a great many causes, and these you arbitrarily connect into *one* and call it almighty. In p. 719 you commit another absurdity by a simile or two, which, like most other similies, will not bear the test of critical examination. Mr. Carter would have been more correct than you are, had he said, the power of a mighty army *centers* in the general, because he could have shewn the general was the centre whence orders diverged. But your general exists only in your imagination. You are "sensible of an (*one*) almighty power." Yes, just as much so, as Mr. Carter is of its intelligence. If you are to imagine, *one* almighty power, what in the name of reason is to prevent Mr. Carter from imagining also that THE (*one*) almighty power is intelligent? If you are to imagine, and to put forth your imaginings as articles of faith, why may not Mr. Carter

do so likewise? If you are to imagine the (*one*) almighty power, what by the same rule of imagining prevents you from giving intelligence to your imagination? If you can bestow existence why not intelligence? Oh, say you, I have not imagined any such power as you speak of, and I have explained my meaning. What you meant to explain was this. I am ignorant of all supernatural causes. I am ignorant how, causes, called natural, operate. I do not know why effects follow causes, but I see many things, precede many things and I infer they will continue so to do. This is unobjectionable and is a good lesson to many of your readers. You then by an effort of the imagination, collect these causes and effects into *one*, into an aggregate which you represent by *one* and call it almighty. Do you not see that this is absurd, and that there is no *one* except in your imagination, which no more makes one of the many, than Mr. Carter's imagination makes that one, or rather not that one which is yours, but another one which is of his own manufacture, intelligent.

You have no occasion, and can never have an occasion to build up any system, you never can have the materials to build with, unless mere imaginings be materials. You have no occasion to make concessions, and if heedlessly you continue to make concessions you will as constantly make mistakes.

Almighty power and *almighty being* is, after all you have said, merely a play upon words, as my remarks have, I think, shewn. I have before spoken to you of the doctrine of association of ideas, and have told you that he who is master of the theory of the association of ideas has made a great progress in useful metaphysics. Your want of a little more knowledge on this subject has been the cause of your present error. You had been taught to reverence the *word* almighty, and nothing but the word, because it had never conveyed to you any clear idea, nor were you at any time able to form one; this observation applies to every one, no one ever has formed, or ever can form a clear idea of almighty. But the vague notion instilled into you remains, and the recurrence of the word has still its effect. Not having examined yourself sufficiently on this point, you were led astray incautiously by your old associations, and used the word carelessly. Might and power were originally as nearly synonymous as two words could well be. Might now generally means considerable power. Mighty means very powerful. Almighty is a word used absurdly, in a vain attempt to express what we can have no idea of. We can form no idea of might beyond the mightiest, the word almighty is an attempt to express something inconceivable as to power. It is an hyperbolic expression. Johnson says, it means omnipotent, and omnipotent means almighty. Have you now any clear idea of almighty—a mighty mighty---that is more than mighty, and will you again say, "an (*one*) almighty."

If men had but the courage to examine themselves as to the meaning of the words they use, they would cease to employ many which at present they think are very important words, they would find them to be sounds without sense, and would from mere shame cease to use them.

What we want is a good Logic, and this want is, I am happy to say, in a fair way to be supplied, by the only man in existence who is, or perhaps ever was qualified for the task.

RIEGO!

THE murder of Riego has not passed without particular notice in this publication from the want of sympathy for his fate, but from a desire to wait for something like a correct statement of his last sufferings.

It will be recollected that he was kept unemployed as a General, until there were no hopes of success to the cause of the Constitution, and then *apparently* turned forth as a sacrifice for the trembling Constitutionalists in Cadiz; as a sort of tub to the Whale-Legitimacy. His virtue and his bravery never forsook him; he made an effort, under desperate circumstances, to recover what treachery had thrown away—a Constitutional army: but he was employed too late, and fell into the hands of the Royalists. *His first reverse was his death warrant*: to detail the forms and process of official accusation and condemnation would be here a waste of space and time; suffice it to say, that the usual mockeries in such a case were gone through, and on the 7th November he was led to the gallows under the treatment which the following letter exhibits:

“SIR PAUL BAGGOT, at Madrid, gives the following details of the execution of RIEGO:—‘I saw poor RIEGO suffer. I had a place at a window, within twenty yards of the spot. He was drawn in a basket, by an ass of the lowest description. A new gallows was erected in the Plaza de Cevada. The Plaza was completely crowded, as well as the house tops, windows, &c. At one o’clock he arrived, and was assisted out of the basket by two friars, who placed on the step of the ladder, and held over him a crucifix during his confession. He then ascended the ladder, and a friar made him say, or assisted him in saying the Creed, till he came to *and in Jesus Christ our Lord*, when he was instantly

turned off the step, and the executioner jumped on his shoulders, holding by the rope by which he was suspended, frequently rising up, and then forcing himself down on his victim; in a few minutes he put a handkerchief over his face, and in an instant took it off, and waved it over his head, crying *Viva!* which was twice answered by the crowd. Two other men pulled his legs, and one hung on him for ten minutes; another fellow struck him with his fist, as a mark of indignity. After the body had been hanging half an hour, I was invited by the Baron HARDENBERG, who was on duty, to see him. The poor fellow's tongue was propelled from his mouth, which appeared very much swollen and black. RIEGO's figure was very slender, and his height about five feet nine inches. He wore a mustachio on the upper lip, and was dressed in grey pantaloons, black waistcoat, and covered with a dirty smock frock, which had been once white; he was degraded as much as possible. I observed the greatest joy among the multitude, and I saw many persons embracing under the gallows. A French officer in my room called out *shame, shame!* and retired.

Character is formed by the circumstances which have surrounded the individual: the principle extends to a society—a nation. The circumstance of Riego's destruction cannot fail to form something of a *character that shall trust no more Kings nor spare their lives when conquered*. To reason upon the treatment of Riego in any other language would be unworthy of the subject.

RICHARD CARLILE.

MINA!

MINA has landed in England from a French Ship! He, at least, conquered influence enough to obtain respect and to save his life. His character seems to be truly admirable, under all circumstances—so that calumny cannot even fix on it—nor can Royalty defame it.

R. C.

TO MR. CARLILE.

So going out into the streets,
 He bawls with all his might,
 If any of you tread awry
 I'm here to set you right.

I can repair your leaky boots
 And under-lay your soles;
 Back-sliders I can under-prop,
 And patch up all your holes.

MR. CARLILE,

THE account your correspondent gives of the conversation that took place between him and his fellow passenger, in the stage from Greenwich to London, put me in mind of a public preacher on Black-heath some time ago, who, in his harangue, did not forget to abuse you and Mr. Paine in good style. He put me in mind of an idiot I have read of, who used to divert himself by twisting the swine's tails to make them grunt; for at every repetition of your name, there was a heavy groan from his "beloved brethren," well thought I with Hudibras,

God keep the land from such translators,
 From preaching cobblers, pulpit praters,
 Of order and allegiance haters.

When he was done, I moved up to him and walked with him across the heath in order to ask him a few questions. First, Whether he had ever been personally acquainted with Mr. Paine, or Mr. Carlile? Answer, Never. Why, said I, you spoke of the men with as much infamy as though they had done *you* some private injury, is this Christian doctrine? Answer, It is not with the men that I mean to quarrel, who may, as you say, be very virtuous and honest, but the principles they have wickedly established are calculated to mislead all the kingdom. Well then, said I, you have read their publications I find. Answer, No, indeed, I have never read a single page of any work of the kind, nor would I accept of a Bible, if it came out of a shop that sold such infamous publications as Carlile deals in. Thought I,

These hateful works, I'll say I never knew,
 Declare them false, although I find them true.

I expressed my astonishment at his narrow-minded expressions, and told him that his illiberal ideas were calculated to do more mischief than any thing ever published by Mr. Carlile, and from his principles proceeded all the cruel martyrdoms, and

all the mischief the world has groaned under. Answer, Mr. Carlile has been persecuted for publishing blasphemy, and it is sufficient for me that he was found guilty by a Jury of his countrymen. Well, said I, if it were a fact that Mr. Carlile's publications are of a pernicious tendency, you do wrong to mention his name, for many of your hearers who were ignorant of such publications, would endeavour to buy or borrow them, in order to satisfy themselves of their contents. He acknowledged the truth of this observation, but said that the names of Paine and Carlile (on account of the prosecutions) had become familiar to every man, woman and child, in every part of the kingdom. I answered him, that if he were inclined to make himself useful, he had better get the publications, and refute their contents by directing his discourse to you, either by writing, or by visiting you personally in prison. He said that you were too well provided for in prison, by subscriptions, which he understood were sent you from all parts, and he could not suppose that any advocate for the Christian Religion would be received by you with civility. I told him that I imagined he judged of you from the temper he had displayed in his discourse. That the subscriptions were from persons who had well examined your case and considered you a persecuted man, and were all sent in testimony of respect, and to assist you after the severe losses that you had unjustly met with, and I had no doubt that he (the preacher) would be glad of a collection. He said not upon his own account, that he worked hard at his trade, which made him independent, and holding up his thumb, finally told me, that he was a boot and shoe-maker, yes, said I, according to the old adage,

The higher the plumb-tree, the riper the plumb,
The richer the cobbler, the blacker his thumb,
The closer he works, the harder his bumb.

I now left him, and in my way home amused myself in recalling to my mind a passage in Dr. Grey's notes to Butler. "Here are cobblers who can give good rules for upright walking, and handle scriptures to a bristle; coachmen, who know how to lash the beastly enormities, and curb the headstrong insolences of this British age, stoutly exhorting us to stand up for the truth, lest the wheel of destruction roundly overrun us. We have weavers that can sweetly inform us of the shuttle swiftness of the times, and practically tread out the vicissitudes of all sublunary things, till the web of our life be cut off; and here are mechanics of my profession, who can separate the pieces of salvation from those of damnation, measure out every man's portion, and cut it out by a thread, substantially pressing the points, till they have fashionably filled up their work with a well-bottomed conclusion."

The preaching cobbler next advanc'd,
 Of all his race the valient'st:
 He rais'd the low and fortifi'd
 The weak against the strongest side:
 Ill has he read, that never hit,
 On him in Muse's deathless writ.
 He had a weapon keen and fierce,
 That through a bull-hide shield would pierce,
 And cut it in a thousand pieces,
 Tho' tougher than the knight of Greece is,
 With whom his black-thumb'd ancestor
 Was comrade in the ten years' war:
 For when the restless Greeks sat down,
 So many years before Troy town,
 And were renown'd, as HOMER writes,
 For well-soul'd boots no less than fights,
 They ow'd that glory only to
 His ancestors, who made them so.
 Fast friend he was to REFORMATION,
 Until 'twas worn quite out of fashion.
 Next rectifier of wry LAW,
 And would make them to cure one flaw,
 Learn'd he was, and could take note,
 Transcribe, collect, translate, and quote
 But preaching was his chiefest talent,
 Or argument, in which being valiant,
 He used to lay about and stickle,
 Like ram or bull, at conventicle:
 For disputants, like rams and bulls,
 Do fight with arms that spring from skulls.

I am, Sir, yours very respectfully,

A GREENWICH YOUTH.

October 20, 1823.

RIEGO--SPAIN--FERDINAND.

THE scene of desolation and carnage hath commenced. Ferdinand, the royal monster, has already stained his hands with the blood of the brave, the virtuous Riego! This we may consider as a fatal prelude to the sanguinary and ferocious devastation which awaits the people of Spain; and especially those who have countenanced, or are in consanguinity with the bloodless emancipators of the constitution of 1812. To what degradation has the wavering conduct of the Spanish people reduced their happiness! They have suffered their independence to be wrested from them

with a careless indifference; and, as it were, without a struggle, have left their lives to the mercy of a King whose only pleasure is to feast, to satiate his unrelenting cruelty with the blood of his devoted slaves. They have chained themselves to the car of the detested monks, who exist upon the life-blood of the community; and the blackness of whose crimes, almost sets exposition at defiance.

Is the judicial murder of Riego, the untainted, the spotless Riego, to pass by as a casual event, as a daily and familiar occurrence, as unworthy our consideration or regard? Forbid it Justice! Forbid it insulted Truth and Liberty! Is Freedom to be hunted out of the world, to gratify the ambition—to pamper the indolence of a few crafty and blood-thirsty despots? Shall millions hug a tyrant's chain? Shall they harness themselves to the blood-stained chariot of a crowned robber---a wholesale destroyer of the human species; and a deadly foe to their happiness? Upon what blind confidence have the Spanish people been relying to suffer an armed banditti to pass and conquer their territories, to rivet their existence to the absolute controul of a perjured King, and a horde of locust-like-monks? Irresolution is an unbecoming omen to the heart of the freeman. Failure in so admirable, so glorious an undertaking, ought not to be thought of. Success ought to be the great inspirant, the only excitement, the only determination.

The tragic results of the Spanish contest, if it be worthy the name of contest, may unquestionably be attributed in a great measure to a want of arrangement, to the want of energy on the part of those who hold the physical power of the country under their grasp, and to the investing the most suspicious and unworthy with the greatest quantity of physical strength. Why trust Morillo, Ballasteros, and Abisbal, with the command of numerous legions, while Riego, Quiroga, and others, the real authors of the emancipation, and upon whom bribes were ineffectual, were left in a state of langour and inactivity? How deplorable are the consequences, how horrid the result of such misplaced confidence! Riego murdered! Ferdinand and the Inquisition reinstated in absolute power---in uncontrouled command, and the country garrisoned with foreign troops!

Upon this shoal has the constitution foundered for a time, but the salutary blessings which the Goddess of Liberty diffused during her short abode, balmed with the blood of the brave, the virtuous Riego, will rekindle the latent spark, increase it to a flame, nurture it to perfection; and do justice to the memory of the patriot and the cruelly tortured feelings of his exiled family. Ferdinand may hold his power for a time, but the tottering fabric of monarchical tyranny will ere long be swept from the earth which it has so long infested. The unfortunate conclusion of the Spanish Revolution, will teach its reassertors, and the oppressed multi-

tude of all countries, a salutary lesson; it will teach them the astounding dangers of a mild forbearance; and show them the insecurity of relying upon the oaths of crowned heads.

Had the Liberals, instead of protecting and fostering the beastly Ferdinand, added him to the number of victims which have polluted the Inquisition, clad in one of his own made petticoat Benitoes, Spain would have been happy, Riego its ornament, and the banditti of France, in conjunction with the whole of the Holy Alliance, held at bay. The boldness of such a glorious action would have petrified the bloody monsters of other countries with dread, and have made them look well to themselves, instead of interfering with the internal affairs of other states and plotting the destruction of freedom and freemen in other countries. Is there no private, no avenging hand, to chastise the insolence, to crush the tiger Ferdinand's sway? Is there no Brutus, no Cassius, no Bellingham, no Louvel? Are all those choice souls of resolution vanished? Are the inhabitants of Spain servile, and flattering sycophants, or hypocrites? Not one with Roman virtue, to steel his mind with the admirable sentiment of "Vengeance is mine and I will repay thee!" Are the harmonious *vivas*, which resounded from the distant provinces of Spain, and almost deified the assertors of the constitution of 1812, all vapour and compulsive fulsomness? If there be but one Brutus amongst them, no scruples can operate to prevent him in immortalizing his name, and giving durable freedom to his oppressed country.

A tyrant is a common murderer, a self legalized barbarian, and more destructive in his machinations than a wild beast; hunger is the propelling cause of the ravage of the beast, but the tyrant has no such plea; his cruelty makes him timid, he sees in every man who is virtuous, an enemy to his rapacity, and upon such he reeks his vengeance: as such, he is game to any one, and he is a benefactor to his species who dispatches him.

The Spanish people are ignorant, they must be regenerated with knowledge, and the impetus of the mind purified from the dangerous opiate of a gross and brutalizing superstition: they are the slaves of ignorance, and the dupes of insidious monks: and science is the only effective means to rid them of the complicated diseases with which they are infected. The priests have been the great enemies of improvement, and they have been drawn up in the ranks of despotism, have catered and pandered to the crimes of kings and courts in all ages, and in all countries. These profligate characters, these instillers and disseminators of vice, these enemies of virtue, these pests to society, are the spawn from which the greater portion of individual and national misery has originated. The existence of a priest is a national calamity, and the polluted source from which war, famine, and pestilence have generally risen, which torture mankind and turn the beautiful face of

nature into a frightful wilderness. There can be no sterling happiness and security to a people where the priests have power.

The constitutional government of Spain felt this truism and justly curtailed the monstrous abuses of the church establishment, and abolished the atrocious system of bodily torture with the Inquisition. This useful law of the Cortes entailed upon their heads the hatred of the mitred monsters; they saw, they felt, the people making important advances in knowledge and its attendant civilization. Riego was among the reforming few, his boldness in proclaiming the constitution at Las Cebezas, was the first, the mighty aspirant; the leader of freedom's phalanx, but how have the people consolidated his plans? They have suffered them to be exterminated, and the valorous patriot to be murdered in the centre of their capital, and at noon day! They have given the brutal priests a triumph, an opportunity to revel in the blood of the virtuous. We are exultingly told, by the slaves, that the windows of the houses in the streets, through which Riego was inhumanly dragged, were crowded with monks, and the avenues with armed men, from the former of which a savage yell was heard, when the assassin gave the signal that the vital spark of the martyr had fled. Can any thing afford a more striking instance of the brutalizing effects of the dogmas of religion, and the hardened feeling which it engenders, than this circumstance? The royal and priestly jugglers may controul public feeling for a time, but that enthusiasm which planted the standard of independence will again unfurl it to an astonished world, and then in vain may the satellites of civil and religious tyranny call out for mercy and forbearance: the spirit of the murdered Riego will cry revenge!! revenge!!

London, November 20, 1823.

The Spanish people are ignorant, they must be regenerated with knowledge, and the impetus of the mind purified from the dangerous opiate of a gross and brutish superstition: they are the slaves of ignorance, and the dupes of insidious monks; and science is the only effective means to rid them of the complicated diseases with which they are infected. The priests have been the great enemies of improvement, and they have been drawn up in the ranks of despotism, have catered and banded to the crimes of kings and courts in all ages, and in all countries. These gigantic characters, these monsters and disseminators of vice, these enemies of virtue, these pests to society, are the spawn from which the greater portion of individual and national misery has originated. The existence of a priest is a national calamity, and the pollution of a nation is a national disgrace.

Printed and Published by R. CARLILE, 84, Fleet Street.—All Correspondences for "The Republican" to be left at the place of publication.